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Home Care Consumer
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Support Bill #5433 – collective bargaining for home care workers

I was injured in a car accident in 2003 when a truck hit my car. At the time, I was a teacher at a nursery school. After my accident, I was paralyzed and could not work or live on my own. I lived in a nursing home for many years, but I really wanted to be able to go back to living in my own home. When I was approached to leave the nursing home and be a part of the new homecare program, I was very excited. I understand some people need to live in nursing homes, but now that I live on my own I never want to go back.

I try to treat my PCAs with respect, and they treat me the same way. But they face problems because of the low pay the job provides. One of my PCAs works full-time for me, but has state insurance and is on food stamps. Another one of my PCAs works Saturdays and Sundays for me but has to have two other jobs to make ends meet. Lastly, I have a live-in PCA who does not get paid at all, even though she cares for me every night. PCAs only get a paycheck, with no benefits at all. This makes people not want to stick around. I have had PCAs that don't respect the position because they only earn a check, nothing more.

With a union, workers and consumer could fight for better training. This would result in higher quality care. I had a PCA that was not trained well enough and I was injured because of it. If she were better trained that wouldn't have happened. Better paid, better trained workers will be more productive.

I support the homecare bill to improve the system for myself and for my workers. We need a better networking system because we need a good backup system and better training. This would result in more reliable workers.